SOME NEW BOOKS.

Robert Owen.

Since 1858, when the late G. J. Holyoake brought out a pamphlet on the life of Robert Owen, who had died in the preceding year, there have been no fewer than six biographies of the founder of socialism in England, four in English, one in German and one in French. All these books will be superseded henceforth by the two volumes collectively entitled *Robert Owen: a Biography*, by Frank Podmore (Appletons), because these are based to a large extent on a collection of letters (some three thousand in all) written to or by Owen, which were found recently and transmitted for safe keeping to the Cooperative Union at Manchester. The letters date from the year 1821, and as they begin just where the unfinished autobiography leaves off, it seems probable that they formed part of the material collected by Owen in his lifetime for the completion of that work.

I.

We learn from the fragment of an autobiography which he published in 1857, the year before his death, that Robert Owen was born in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, North Wales, in May, 1771. His father, also named Robert, had been brought up to be a saddler, and probably an ironmonger, too, as these trades were at that period often united in the small Welsh towns. He was likewise postmaster as long as he lived, but as the salary was fixed at £10 a year it is evident that the office must have conferred more prestige than profit on the holder. Although the population has since increased from about 1,000 to 6,000 Newtown is still a small market town, and its staple industry is still the manufacture of woollen stuffs. Whereas, however, in Owen's boyhood spinning and weaving were alike done by hand, there are now four or five mills with machinery driven by steam.

The young Robert was sent to school in his fifth year, but only remained there until he was 9, as in his class and locality a boy was thought sufficiently educated when he could read fluently, write a legible hand and understand the first four rules of arithmetic. He soon contracted a passion for reading, however, and as he was known to every family in the little towns, had thrown open to him the libraries of the clergymen, physicians and lawyers. In his tenth year he was sent to London, consigned to his eldest brother, who was working there at his trade of saddler. Some six weeks after his arrival in the British metropolis employment was procured for him in a shop in Stamford, Lincolnshire, where articles of female wear were sold. It was agreed that he should serve the first year without pay, the second for a salary of £8 and the third for £10, board, lodging and washing being provided for him in his employer's house. From that period Robert Owen maintained himself without ever applying to his parents for aid. He was at this time religiously inclined and strove most anxiously to find out the true religion. He tells us, however, in his autobiography that the more he heard, read and reflected the more dissatisfied he became with Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, Hindu, Chinese and pagan. Before his investigations were concluded he had convinced himself that religion emanated from the false imaginations "formed when men were ignorant of their own nature, devoid of experience and governed by their random conjectures, which were almost always at first, like their notions of the fixedness of the earth, far from the truth." Apparently in his seventeenth year he removed from Stamford to Manchester, where he secured what he deemed a very good situation in a wholesale and retail establishment, the proprietor of which gave him, besides board, lodging and washing, £40 a year. Here the story of his boyhood ends and thenceforth he took up a man's work.

II.

Before reviewing Owen's life and work in Manchester the biographer deems it well to recall the conditions of the time and country in which he had been born. The closing decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the final stages in the supersession of the mediæval system of industry and the establishment of the present industrial and economic era. The fifty years from 1710 to 1760 had been for England years of good harvests, a slowly increasing population and an unexampled prosperity. The agricultural laborer was better off than he had been for nearly two hundred years, but his status was already changing for the worse. At the close of the seventeenth century there had been in England some 180,000 yeomen—small freeholders tilling their own land—and a large proportion of the English soil was still cultivated by villagers on the communal system; there were also millions of acres of waste land on which the poor could graze domestic animals, and even build cottages. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, the nobility and the country squires betook themselves to the enlargement and the improvement of their estates, and as a means to this end the small freeholders were gradually expropriated, until toward the close of the century the class had become almost extinct. Commons and waste lands were enclosed under successive acts of Parliament, and the old wasteful three field system of the village gave way before better methods of agriculture, which permitted of more profitable rotation of crops, scientific manuring of the ground and improved breeds of sheep and cattle. These measures, while largely increasing the productiveness of the soil and the general wealth of the country, had at the same time the effect of driving out the small freeholder and ultimately of making the agricultural laborer poorer and more dependent than he had been before.

It was, however, in the handicrafts and especially in the textile industries that the progress of the eighteenth century wrought most change. At the beginning of that century the staple industry of England was the manufacture of woollen goods. The raw material was for the most part supplied from native sources and the instruments of manufacture were the spinning wheel and the hand loom. Even if this primitive machinery had admitted of consolidation in large factories the only available motive power was to be found in the water wheel and the horse mill. Moreover, in the early years of the eighteenth century commercial enterprise was exceedingly limited. In the north of England the means of internal communication long remained in a very backward state, for owing to the bad condition of the roads and the comparative absence of inland navigation goods could only be conveyed on pack horses. In the south and west of the country foreign trade and internal communications were more advanced, but even there the functions of capitalist, employer and workman were still, for the most part, undifferentiated.

From the very beginning the manufacture of cotton in England was concentrated chiefly in Manchester and its neighborhood. Both the fibres of which cotton cloth was during the greater part of the eighteenth century composed—until about 1770 linen thread was always used for the warp—were imported, the linen chiefly from Ireland, the cotton from the West Indies. In the first half of the eighteenth century the factory system as we understand it had not yet begun. Even when the employer supplied the raw material and sold the finished cloth the workers for the most part provided their own spinning wheels and looms and worked in their own homes. Up to this time the machinery employed throughout Europe in spinning and weaving had scarcely advanced since the time of the Pharaohs. The distaff indeed had yielded to the spinning wheel, but the spinner still wrought laboriously a single thread with such slowness that one loom, even a hand loom, required the services of six or eight spinning wheels to keep it constantly supplied. The hand loom itself was still worked by the weaver's foot, and until the invention in 1738 of the fly shuttle the thread was still passed through the warp by the weaver's hand. As yet the manufacturers of Manchester could not compete in fineness with the fabrics of India, wrought by still ruder machinery, nor make a thread of cotton strong enough to be used for the warp.

From 1738 onward there came, however, in rapid succession a number of inventions, each aiming at substituting mechanical devices for the slow and uncertain operations of human fingers in spinning. John Wyatt, Thomas Highs, James Hargreaves, Richard Arkwright and Samuel Crompton are the chief names on this roll of honor. Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny, the device being named after his wife, and Arkwright the water frame. Both inventions were actually brought into use for commercial purposes between 1760 and 1770, and a few years later Crompton produced a new machine called the "mule," because it combined the characteristic merits of the two preceding inventions.

In the early years of the nineteenth century steam began to displace water as the motive power in mills and factories, but when Robert Owen came to Manchester—about 1788—the spinning machinery employed in the great mills which were springing up on every side in Manchester was worked by water power, while manufacturers on a smaller scale drove the spinning jennys and mules by hand or foot. During the last twenty years of the eighteenth century there was an enormous expansion of cotton manufactures, the amount of raw cotton imported annually into Great Britain increasing from less than 7,000,000 pounds in 1780 to 56,000,000 pounds in 1800. In the same two decades the value of the cotton cloths annually exported increased from £355,000 to £5,406,000. By 1787 there were forty-one cotton mills in Lancashire and fifty years later the number had increased to 657, while the number of operatives employed in them was computed at more than 137,000. By the latter date the industrial revolution may be said to have been complete and the cottage industry had practically ceased to exist except in a few moorland parishes and other remote corners of England.

Three years after his removal to Manchester Owen was appointed superintendent of a cotton factory employing 500 hands and within a twelvemonth so improved the process of manufacture that he produced yarns running from 250 to 300 hanks to the pound instead of 120 hanks, the utmost fineness attained under his predecessor. In 1794 or 1795 he became a partner in the Chorlton Twist Company, and in 1799 purchased cotton mills at New Lanark from David Dale of Glasgow, agreeing to pay therefor £60,000 in twenty annual instalments. In the same year he married a daughter of Mr. Dale and took possession of a sumptuously equipped house called Greenheys. We should here mention that in 1794 Owen became intimately acquainted with Robert Fulton and made him loans amounting in the aggregate to £170, only a part of which was repaid. In his old age Owen referred to the incident with considerable pride in having been able to help one who was to do so much for the advancement of the world through his application of steam power to navigation.

III.

It is well known that the industrial revolution which took place in England toward the close of the eighteenth century had some disastrous effects upon the working people through the extensive employment of child labor and the prevalence of malignant fever, which was due to the nonsanitary condition of the factories. In those days it was the practice to compel pauper children from the age of 6 upward to do useful work, either in the workhouse itself or as apprentices to outside employers. In the early years of the application of machinery and steam power to cotton manufactures multitudes of them were sent to the spinning mills. Even where the mill owners were themselves liberal and humane, like Owen's father-in-law, David Dale, the vicious system still permitted all manner of iniquity and oppression. The ages of the children when apprenticed to Mr. Dale were from 5 to 8 and the hours of labor in the mills at New Lanark from 6 in the morning to 7 in the evening. Owen, in his evidence before the committee of 1816, explained that from these thirteen hours were to be deducted one and a half hours allowed for meals, but even so, the children worked eleven and a half hours a day. Remedial legislation began in the act of 1802, which Sir Robert Peel carried through Parliament, and the general conditions of child labor in the cotton factories were still further improved by the act of 1819. It was not until 1816 that Owen, having been hampered by his partners, had been enabled to reduce the nominal hours of work at the New Lanark mills to twelve hours a day. He ultimately succeeded in raising the lower limit of age at which children could be employed to 10 years.

The name of Robert Owen is little known to the present generation as an educational reformer. We find scant mention of him in encyclopædia articles on education. Two causes are suggested for the undeserved oblivion which has fallen on this part of his life's work. In the first place he published no formal treatise on pedagogy and did not even find time to write a systematic account of the scheme of instruction actually pursued in the New Lanark schools. The main reason, however, for the forgetfulness of the work accomplished by him in this field was doubtless the ambiguous reputation acquired by Owen the Socialist, Owen the infidel and Owen the spiritualist, which eclipsed the fame of Owen the founder of infant schools and the pioneer in Britain of rational education.

Robert Owen's ideas about education had the defect characteristic of the self-taught thinker; they were already belated, even at the time when he applied them. In his exaggeration of the importance of post-natal circumstances in forming character he was guided by his bias of the eighteenth century thinkers. As a matter of fact, however, the reaction against the pre-revolutionary philosophy had set in long before 1813, and the great conception of evolution was even then dawning on the world. The plain facts of heredity, though not of course bulking so large as in modern thought, were recognized as counting for much more than Robert Owen had ever imagined. It is also to be remarked that his first years at New Lanark shut him off to a great extent from intercourse with educated men, and the extraordinary success of his effort for the regeneration of the miniature society over which he exercised lordship confirmed him in the belief that man is the creature of circumstances and that the reconstruction of the world, when this truth is grasped firmly, is merely a question of the adaptation of means to ends.

Owen's name was first brought conspicuously before the public by an essay published in 1813 under the title of a "New View of Society," followed as it was by other essays advocating social and political reforms—reforms based on the ideas put forward in England some twenty years before by Godwin in his "Political Justice." He had an interview with Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, and Lord Sidmouth, then Home Secretary, undertook to circulate the privately printed edition of the essays among the Governments and learned bodies of Europe and America. The Archbishop of Canterbury invited him to Lambeth, that Owen might read to him the later essays while still in manuscript, and afterward expressed a desire to correspond with their author on the subject. Among other acquaintances made by Owen at this time was the Archbishop of Armagh, several Bishops, and Clarkson, Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, Malthus, James Mill, Ricardo and Sir James Mackintosh. A copy of the essays even reached Napoleon in his retirement at Elba, and Owen in his old age expressed the belief that the destinies of Europe might have been changed if the allied sovereigns had allowed the exile to return peaceably to his throne, and thence carry into effect the good resolutions with which the "New View of Society" had inspired him. It is difficult to take quite seriously Owen's account of the reception of his ideas, but it is probable that his unaffected sincerity, the good will to all mankind which radiated from him and the knowledge of the great things he had actually done at New Lanark drew men toward him and made them welcome one who must have proved merely a colossal bore if he had not been of the very salt of the earth.

IV.

There is no doubt that like all other education reformers since the French Revolution Owen derived his views from Rousseau or from the movement of thought whereof Rousseau was the most conspicuous pioneer and embodiment. The general similarity of his ideas with those of Rousseau and of Rousseau's disciple Pestalozzi leaves no room for controversy on this point. The debt on Owen's part, however, was apparently unrecognized by him. There is no allusion to Rousseau in any of his writings, and of Pestalozzi he seems not to have heard until he went in 1818 to the Continent and there visited the schools of Oberlin at Fribourg, of Fellenberg at Hofwyl, and of Pestalozzi himself, at Yverdun. Owen warmly approved the "truly catholic spirit" in which Oberlin conducted his school for the children of the poor, but even to the time of his death Owen seems to have been unaware that Oberlin had anticipated him by some forty years in founding infant schools. With Fellenberg's establishment, which he inspected in the course of the same tour, Owen was so pleased that a few months later he sent his two elder boys, Robert Dale Owen and William Owen, to be educated there. The impression made upon him by the Yverdun school was not so favorable, although he acknowledged that Pestalozzi's school was one step in advance of the prevailing methods. For his own educational system Owen was not disposed to claim originality, but his ideas concerning the subject were certainly far ahead of those of his British contemporaries, and his enterprise at New Lanark deserves to be commemorated as furnishing a model in some respects too far in advance of his time to be generally adopted even now.

The clearest account of the system of infant education pursued at New Lanark is given by Owen himself. The infant school, he relates, was opened on January 2, 1816. All children above a year old were, if the parents were willing, to be sent to the school. Owen himself during the first few months of its establishment was constantly in the school building and took pains to win the confidence and affection of every child. The selection of teachers for infants had exercised him much, for he felt that it would be worse than useless to take persons whose only ideas of education were concerned with books. He needed those who loved children and would have unlimited patience with them and who, moreover, would be willing to follow unreservedly Owen's instructions as regards the things to be taught and the methods of teaching. To the teachers eventually chosen his first instruction was never on any provocation to use harsh words or actions to the children. Further, while showing in themselves examples of uniform kindness, they were to endeavor by every means in their power to inculcate a like spirit of kindness in the children in their dealings with each other. The children, he recalls in his autobiography, were not to be annoyed with books; but were to be taught the uses or nature and qualities of the common things around them by familiar conversation when their curiosity was excited so as to induce them to ask questions about them. The school room was furnished with paintings, chiefly of animals, with maps, and often supplied with natural objects from the gardens, fields and woods, the examination and explanation of which always aroused inquisitiveness and brought about an animated conversation between the children and their instructors. At 4 the children began to show an eager desire to understand the use of the maps of the four quarters of the world upon a large scale, which purposely had been hung in the schoolroom to attract their attention. Buchanan, their schoolmaster, was first taught the use of the maps, and then how to instruct the children for their amusement, for the fundamental principle of Owen's method of educating infants was to make everything interesting and amusing to them.

It was, Owen says in his autobiography, most encouraging and delightful to see the progress which the infants and children made in real knowledge without the use of books. He doubted whether, when the best means of imparting instruction or of forming character should become known, books would ever be used before children should have attained their tenth year. He insisted that without books children would have a superior character formed for them by the age of 10. We are assured that after some time the infants subjected to this training were unlike all other children of parents belonging to the same class, and, indeed, unlike the children of any social class. Those 2 years old and above had already begun dancing lessons, and those of 4 years and upward singing lessons. Both sexes were also drilled and became efficient in military exercises. The general principle underlying the whole of the New Lanark system was the exclusion of all artificial rewards or punishments. Owen held that such artificial incentives to action are harmful, as disguising the operation of natural and social laws, substituting false ideals and erroneous notions of the world, and generally leaving the character weak and unstable when the artificial system ceases to operate. There were at New Lanark no prizes for industry or good conduct, nor was any child punished for idleness or disobedience. The scholars were taught to find the best incentive to industry in the pleasure of learning and in the spirit of innocent emulation which springs naturally when the children are learning in company. Visibility of good conduct brought their own reward in the friendly feeling which they called forth in response both from teachers and fellow pupils; and, where everything was done in kindness and all restraints were felt to be reasonable, and most were imposed in the interests of the children themselves, there was little temptation to disobedience. Such, at any rate, was the theory on which the New Lanark schools were governed; and by the general testimony of those who saw the system in action, children so amiable and gentle were never seen before.

V.

A chapter is devoted to the work done or attempted by Robert Owen in the second decade of the nineteenth century for the unemployed. The problem which he tried to solve was urgent. During the twenty years of war with the French Republic and Empire Great Britain had the lion's share of the carrying trade of the world, but in July, 1815, when the long contest was closed, the continental industries revived and Britain's foreign trade was proportionately curtailed. Moreover, the island's labor market was disturbed by the sudden disbandment of the huge military and naval forces and the return to domestic industries of some [illegible] able bodied men. Thus a shrinking demand coincided with an enormous influx of laborers. It is not surprising that wages should have fallen rapidly and that hunger and suffering should have been experienced throughout the land for some years thereafter. Owen managed to keep the mills at New Lanark working, but had to turn away daily many applicants for employment. Such was the condition of the country when, in 1816 and 1817, Robert Owen first propounded his celebrated plan for the provision by the State of useful work for the unemployed, the promulgation of which marked the beginning of modern socialism. He laid down the postulate that the ultimate cause of the distress experienced was the displacement of human labor by machinery. He asserted that in Great Britain alone machinery represented the labor of more than a hundred millions of the most industrious human beings; and as machinery was far cheaper in the working it must in the nature of things tend continually to displace more and more the mere toiler with his hands. His conclusion was that either the use of machinery must be curtailed or millions of British subjects must be suffered to starve to death. Consequently advantageous occupations must be found for the poor and unemployed working classes, to whose labor mechanism must be rendered subservient instead of being applied to supersede it. Nothing came of this proposal at the time, although Owen spent some £4,000 in securing publicity for his views.

Even with the party of reform his ideas found little favor. Men of the type of Cobbett could not be expected to approve the benevolent paternal despotism which Owen's personal experience had led him to regard as the ideal constitution. The Radicals were convinced that even if a scheme of the kind proposed by Owen were practicable it could but act as a temporary palliative, and in the long run must be harmful to the cause of progress by diverting attention from the real remedy for the prevailing distress. Looking back upon it, however, from the point of view of the twentieth century, the author of this book maintains that in its original form Owen's plan could scarcely be classed as a quack remedy. Indeed, the hope of bringing together vacant land and unemployed labor has continued to inspire successive generations of social reformers down to the present day. Mr. Podmore reminds us that no less an authority than Ricardo was in favor of giving Owen's scheme a fair trial.

VI.

Owen, however, had other enemies besides the reformers. Southey had already discovered that Owen's system of social regeneration was not founded on religious principles. Indeed, though Owen had refrained from defining his attitude precisely in his published essays, he had made it sufficiently clear that his own religious beliefs were far removed from orthodoxy. To a mind like Owen's the mere suppression, from no ignoble motives, of unpopular opinions must have seemed like treason to the truth. Accordingly he came to a public meeting held on August 21, 1817, resolved boldly to confront his accusers of the clerical party and to leave unspoken no jot or tittle of his message to mankind. In the speech made by him on that occasion he admitted frankly that the experiment in State Socialism advocated by him would be a failure unless it were based on a general renunciation of all existing religions. Unless, he said, mankind was now prepared to dismiss all erroneous religious notions and to feel the justice and necessity of acknowledging publicly the most unlimited religious freedom it would be futile to erect villages of union and mutual cooperation; for it would be vain to look on this earth for occupants of such villages who could understand how to live in the bond of peace and unity, or who could really love their neighbor as themselves, whether he were Jew or Gentile, Mohammedan or Pagan, Infidel or Christian. He declared that "any religion that creates one particle of feeling short of this is *false*, and must prove a curse to the whole human race." Such was the famous denunciation of all the religions of the world to which Owen himself was accustomed to refer as the turning point in his life. There can be no doubt that Owen's outspoken reprobation of current religious systems did much to alienate those of his friends who occupied high places in the world. Our author deems it probable, however, that his own extravagance and want of judgment did still more to discredit his cause with many who would have remained unaffected by the proof of his unorthodoxy. As a matter of fact, Owen from the first had shown himself incapable of answering or even apparently of understanding the two cardinal objections urged against his scheme, namely, the enormous expenditure involved and the danger of population, deprived of the natural checks, increasing beyond the limits of subsistence.

Nothing, however, could repress Owen's optimism. In 1818, being then at Frankfort, he wrote two memorials, one addressed to the Governments of Europe and America, the other to the Allied Powers assembled in congress at Aix-la-Chapelle. These memorials were worded carefully and temperately. There was in them no mention of quadrangular villages or of the pernicious influence of religion, and the egotism which had marked Owen's addresses in 1817 was almost entirely absent. Nevertheless, these memorials recapitulated briefly the main points of the arguments previously developed in England, three propositions being advanced, namely, that the introduction of machinery had rendered possible the production of riches enough, and much more than enough, for all human wants; secondly, that mankind now possessed the requisite means and knowledge to enable them to mould to their will the characters of the next generation; and, thirdly, that it is to the interest of Governments and individuals to put that knowledge into practice without delay. The event was not to bear out the assertion made by him at this time that any effort to stop or retard the introduction of such measures would be unavailing.

After 1822 Owen ceased to urge his views upon audiences recruited mainly from the well to do and educated classes. His appeals to them had not been altogether unproductive, measured by the standard of subscription lists, but the enthusiasm aroused was short lived and none of the subscription lists ever matured. In later years Owen addressed his message to a different and larger body of hearers. On his return, some six years later, from America and the failure of his experiment at New Harmony, Ind., he found a more congenial environment among the working classes. For the rest of his life his appeal was addressed mainly to them, and if the response which it elicited was not always of the precise kind at which he aimed, the effects produced were, at any rate, more lasting.

VII.

A concise account of the New Harmony Community and of its collapse is given in the thirteenth chapter of this book. In April, 1825, Owen bought from the Rappites, who had founded it, the village of New Harmony as it stood, with all its industries and about 30,000 acres of land, for about £30,000. The fate of the experiment is well known. After the lapse of a few years the little community renounced socialism and lapsed into complete individualism, Owen and Maclure, his fellow landlord, selling or leasing in small lots such of the property as they did not retain in their own hands. From first to last Owen incurred a personal loss of more than £40,000—four-fifths of his entire available capital at that time. But although Owen's application of socialistic principles proved in practice a failure, his efforts had an unlooked for success in another direction. New Harmony remained for more than a generation the chief scientific and educational centre in the West, and the influences which radiated from it made themselves felt in many ways in the social and political structure of the Western country.

Meanwhile the cooperative movement started by Owen before he crossed the Atlantic to embark on the New Harmony experiment had acquired much momentum in England. By the beginning of the year 1830 there were nearly 300 cooperative societies in the United Kingdom, and a year or two later the number had risen to between four and five hundred. All these societies recognized that they owed their existence to Robert Owen's teaching and inspiration and looked up to him as their founder and prophet.

During the years which immediately followed his return from the United States Owen advocated and supported the labor exchanges, all of which, with one exception, ended in disaster, and he took a leading part in the cooperative congresses, which, beginning in 1831, continued thereafter to be held semi-annually at various towns in England. He also delivered many courses of lectures in connection with the British Association for Promoting Coöperative Knowledge. With political reforms as such Owen never had any sympathy. There is scarcely an allusion in his correspondence at this period to the agitation for Parliamentary reform which resulted in the passage of the Reform act of 1832. Owen's aloofness from all popular movements for political liberty and constitutional progress is traced in the book before us to several sources. In the first place he was aristocratic in his methods and the whole cast of his mind. He appears always to have conceived of reform as something imposed on the mass of the people from above. He never adequately realized the possibilities of a spontaneous movement for social betterment. Moreover, he was too thoroughgoing an idealist to submit to compromise of any kind. He could never rest content in a halfway house. He could tolerate no half measures, none of the temporary shifts, the nice adjustments of means to ends, the give and take policies which are essential to the success of ordinary political or social reforms. He therefore found it difficult to work with others, and others in turn were apt to find him self-willed, visionary and impracticable.

With the two great popular movements which marked the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century, Chartism and the agitation for the repeal of the corn laws, Owen had little sympathy. He was not identified with either of the great democratic movements of the day. Nevertheless, those decades were by no means the least fruitful or least important of his life. They were the years of his greatest literary activity. Throughout the whole of that period he poured himself forth in continual lectures, addresses, tracts and books and exerted an ever growing influence over an incessantly widening circle. The fact that Owen had now broken definitely with trade unionists, with commercial cooperators and with all schemes of political reform of any kind enabled him to concentrate his whole energies on the spread of his own peculiar teachings and to organize a compact and enthusiastic company of disciples. From this time onward Owen put aside the things of the Old World and devoted himself to proclaiming the happiness which he believed was coming upon the earth.

VIII.

Could Owen fairly be called an atheist? Such an epithet can scarcely be reconciled with his own definition of his creed which he set forth in 1835 in an editorial article published in the *New Moral World*. Essaying to define the nature of the power which controls the universe, he says that we can have no certain knowledge of it, but may hazard the conjecture that an eternal, uncaused existence has always filled the universe and is therefore omnipresent; that this eternal, omnipresent existence possesses attributes "to direct the atom and control the aggregate of nature"; in other words to govern the universe as it is governed; that these attributes, being eternal and infinite, are incomprehensible to man; that if this Power had desired to make the nature of its existence known to man it would have enabled him to comprehend it without mystery or doubt; that as this knowledge has not been given to or acquired by man it is not essential to his well being and happiness; finally that the Power which made man cannot ever in the slightest iota be changed in its eternal course by the request or prayer of a being so small and insignificant as is man when compared with the universe and its operations. Religion or the duty of man to this Power Owen defined as follows: "The whole duty of man is to attain the object of his existence, which is to be happy himself, to make his fellow beings happy and to endeavor to make the existence of all that is formed to feel pleasure and pain as delightful as his knowledge and power and their nature will admit."

From these definitions it follows that Owen was a deist after the fashion of the eighteenth century. Like his other opinions his theology was borrowed from prerevolutionary France. In those days he would doubtless have been labelled an agnostic and his views would have been regarded even by the Church of England with toleration or indifference. That Church was less tolerant sixty years ago. During the period under review there were many prosecutions for blasphemy against the Socialists, and our author concedes that the persecution to which the Socialists were subjected for some years in England at the hands of the Clerical party was not without some justification. It was not difficult for an intolerant and unimaginative Christian to convince himself that socialism aimed at subverting social order, morality and religion; that its creed was sheer blasphemy and its motive forces greed and lust.

IX.

For some three years after the collapse of the communistic experiment known as Harmony Hall Owen published no important work and had no periodical to represent his views. In 1849, however, the chief points of his system previously set forth in the "Book of the New Moral World" were recapitulated in a slim octavo volume called "The Revolution in the Mind and Practice of the Human Race; or the Coming Change from Irrationality to Rationality." In November, 1850, appeared the first number of "Robert Owen's Journal, Explanatory of the Means to Well-place, Well-employ and Well-educate the Population of the World." From this time onward Owen was represented by a succession of periodicals until his death in 1858. He now had, however, no organized body of disciples, as in the days of 1832-45. His periodicals no longer recorded the varying fortunes of great socialist experiences. Their columns were now filled with repetitions of Owen's message in various forms, leading articles, addresses to Governments, letters to prominent statesmen and reprints of Owen's previous publications. His mind was feeding on itself; he could but repeat his message in endless monotony.

The personality of the subject of this biography is brought home vividly to the reader in a final chapter. Robert Owen, we are told, was by no means a handsome man. Of his ugliness in middle life there can be no doubt, but with advancing years it is probable that the rugged lines of the face were somewhat softened. In general society Owen could be a bore of the first magnitude. He was conscious of a message to be delivered to mankind, and in the business of its delivery he recognized no limitation of place or season and no distinction of person. Despite his indifference to social conventions, however, Owen throughout his life commanded the respect of all. Miss Martineau has testified that he interested her by his candor and cheerfulness, his benevolence and charming manners, which "would make him the most popular man in England if he could but distinguish between assertion and argument, and abstain from wearying his friends with his monotonous doctrines." Miss Martineau added: "His certainty that we might make life a heaven, and his hallucination that we are going to do so immediately under his guidance, have caused his wisdom to be overlooked in his absurdity. I own I became weary of him, while ashamed, every time I witnessed his fine temper and manners, of having felt so." Miss Martineau, however, was only one of many who, without any special sympathy with Owen's plans for the regeneration of the world, were drawn into terms of affectionate intimacy with him by the magnetism of his personal character. In those who accepted Owen not merely as a friend but as a prophet the feelings which he inspired went far beyond ordinary affection.

Robert Owen was a man without guile. He was also without malice. It was the union in him, in a supreme degree, of simplicity and good will that explains his influence. An old friend remarked to his son that if Robert Owen had had in his nursery seven thousand children instead of seven there would have been love enough to go around. The stream of kindliness flowed on inexhaustible until the end, which came in November, 1858. His life had been one long protest against the poverty and unhappiness—needless, as he conceived—which he saw around him. His hand and heart were always open; rarely does he seem to have turned a deaf ear to any appeal. In a word, Owen carried out visibly in act the religion which he preached: "Pure and genuine religion, which never did and never will consist in unmeaning phrases, forms and ceremonies, but in the daily, undeviating practice, in thought, word and action, of charity, benevolence and kindness to every human being with whom we come into communication or have any transaction, near or remote." M. W. H.

Samuel Adams's Correspondence.

The third volume of *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, collected and edited by HARRY ALONZO CUSHING (Putnam's), covers the eventful period from March, 1773, to December, 1777. Within this period took place the battle of Bunker Hill, the expeditions under Montgomery and Arnold against Canada, the Declaration of Independence, the evacuation of Boston, the occupation of New York by the British troops under Howe, the New Jersey campaign, including the American victories at Trenton and Princeton, and the Northern campaign that culminated in the surrender of Burgoyne, which was to be followed by the treaty of alliance with France. The letters here printed set forth the comments on these epoch making events, made at the time by a patriot who more than any other man had shaped the attitude of the colony of Massachusetts toward the mother country; a man who borrowed his opinions from nobody, but who for a quarter of a century exercised a preponderant influence in New England.

Samuel Adams's brief reference to the engagement at Bunker Hill will be found in a letter addressed to his wife from Philadelphia on June 28, 1775. After mentioning that he had just received letters from friends at the camp in and around Cambridge informing him of the engagement between the British and the American troops in Charlestown, he says: "I cannot but be greatly rejoiced at the tried valor of our countrymen, who by all accounts behaved with an intrepidity becoming those who fought for their liberties against the mercenary soldiers of a tyrant." He adds: "The death of our truly amiable and worthy friend Dr. Warren is greatly afflicting. The language of friendship is: How shall we resign him! But it is our duty to submit to the dispensations of Heaven, 'whose ways are ever gracious, ever just.' He fell in a glorious struggle for the public liberty." Referring to the proclamation recently issued by Gen. Gage in which Samuel Adams was one of the persons excepted from amnesty, he writes: "Gage has made me respectable by naming me first among those who are to receive no favor from him." He assures his wife that the proclamation was the subject of ridicule in Philadelphia. Recurring to the same subject on September 26, 1775, in a letter from Philadelphia to Elbridge Gerry, Samuel Adams said that until he visited headquarters at Cambridge he had never heard of the valor displayed by Prescott at Bunker Hill, nor of the ingenuity evinced by Knox and Warren in planning the military works at Roxbury. "We were told," here they "there were none in our camp who understood the business of an engineer or anything more than the manual exercise of the gun. This we had from great authority, and for want of more certain intelligence were obliged at least to believe. There are many military geniuses at present unemployed and overlooked who, I hope, when the army is new modelled, will be sought after and invited into the service of their country."

Of the evacuation of Boston by Gen. Gage mention is made in a letter from Philadelphia, dated April 30, 1776, to John Scollay. "My intention," says Adams, "was to congratulate you and your brethren, the selectmen, upon the precipitate flight of the British army and its adherents from the town of Boston, and to urge on you the necessity of fortifying the harbor, so that the enemy's ships might never approach it hereafter." He goes on the say: "I am greatly concerned at the present defenceless state of Boston, and, indeed, of the whole Eastern district, which comprehends New England. We have applied for and obtained a committee of Congress to consider the state of that district. In the meantime I hope that the General Assembly and the town are exerting themselves for the security of the harbor."

Of the reverses suffered at Quebec Adams writes under date of July 9, 1776, to Joseph Hawley of Massachusetts: "Our repeated misfortunes in Canada have greatly chagrined every man who wishes well to America. I dare not at present communicate to you what I take to have been the real causes of those disasters. Some of them, indeed, must be obvious to any man who has been attentive to that department. Our secret enemies have found means to sow the seeds of discord and faction there, and Heaven has suffered the smallpox to prevail among our troops." Adams goes on to say: "It is our duty to try all means to restore all our affairs [in Canada] to a good footing, but I despair of that being effected till next winter. To be acting merely on the defensive at a time when we should have been in full possession of that country is mortifying indeed. The subject is disgusting to me." In the same letter he informs his correspondent that "the Congress has at length declared the colonies free and independent States. Upon this I congratulate you, for I know your heart has long been set upon it." Nevertheless apprehension is expressed that "much has been lost by delaying to take this decisive step. It is my opinion that if it had been done nine months ago we might have been justified in the sight of God and man. If we had done it then, in my opinion Canada would by this time have been one of the United Colonies; but 'much is to be endured for the hardness of men's hearts.'" Concerning the significance of the Declaration of Independence, Adams points out that "we shall now see the way clear to form a confederation, contract alliances and send our ambassadors to foreign Powers, and do other acts becoming the character we have assumed."

In a letter written to his wife from Baltimore on December 19, 1776, Samuel Adams comments on the "unaccountable backwardness in the people of the Jerseys and Pennsylvania to defend their country and crush their enemies, when I am satisfied it was in their power to do it. The British as well as Hessian officers have severely chastised them for their folly." Reports have reached him, he says, that "such savage tragedies have been enacted by them without respect to age or sex as have equalled the most barbarous ages and nations of the world. Sorry I am that the people [of the two colonies named] so long refused to hearken to the repeated calls of their country. They have already deeply stained the honor of America and they must surely be as unfeeling as rocks if they do not rise with indignation and revenge the shocking injuries done to their wives and daughters."

In a letter from Philadelphia to James Warren, dated June 30, 1777, Adams alludes to the proposed Articles of Confederation, then the subject of debate in the Continental Congress. One question, he says, is: What share of votes each of the States, which differ so much in wealth and numbers, shall have in determining the action of the Congress of the Confederation. After pointing out that the union of the States and the security of the liberty of the whole will depend on the solution of this problem he expresses the belief that the Continental Congress will arrive at the decision that each State shall have one vote, but that certain great questions shall require the concurrent votes of nine States for a decision.

In one of the last letters printed in this volume Adams expresses to Roger Sherman his satisfaction at the supersession of Gen. Schuyler by Gen. Gates in command of the Northern army. It is well known that history has not confirmed Adams's opinion on this point, but has reduced Gates to insignificant dimensions, while it has absolved Schuyler from personal responsibility for the reverses at first encountered by the American troops in the Northern campaign of 1777. "Schuyler," writes Adams, "has written a series of weak and contemptible things in a style of despondence which alone, I think, is sufficient for the removal of him from that command; for if his pen expresses the true feelings of his heart it cannot be expected that the bravest veterans would fight under such a General, admitting they had no suspicion of treachery." Adams adds that Schuyler, in a letter dated August 4 at Still Water, "writes in a tone of perfect despair. He seems to have no confidence in his troops, or in the States whence reenforcements are to be drawn." Schuyler, it seems, announced that "Gen. Burgoyne is bending his course this way. He will probably be here in eight days, and unless we are well reenforced" (which Schuyler did not expect) "as much further as he pleases to go." Adams's comment is: "Was ever any poor General more mortified? But he has by this time received his quietus. Gates takes the command there, and I trust our affairs in that quarter will soon wear a more promising aspect." So they did, thanks mainly, however, not to Gates, but to Benedict Arnold.

TOOTH PLUGGING.

Mr. Killkinton Changes His Views Regarding an Old Song.

"You remember," said Mr. Killkinton, "that grand old song, 'Grandpa's teeth are plugged with zinc'?

"Well, I always supposed that that zinc business was simply a grotesquely humorous flight of fancy. I never thought that anybody's teeth could really be filled with zinc; but now I am not so sure about that.

"Lately I have had four teeth filled, and no two have been filled with the same material. One was filled with amalgam, one with gold, one with porcelain and one with gutta percha; and now the material they used to fill grandpa's teeth with in the song doesn't seem to me anything like so ridiculous as it did.

"I have seven teeth yet to be filled; and if the dentist keeps on as he has begun, using something different for every tooth, why, I wouldn't be surprised if before I got through I had one tooth at least filled with zinc."